Integrating an Engineer Platoon within a Combined Arms Team

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In war, as well as in training, well-established combined arms teams, like the Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), are frequently augmented with additional engineer assets. These nonhabitual engineers do not have the luxury of bringing a working understanding of the team to the battle and, subsequently, are not fully integrated into the fight. The repercussion of this is severe and, as history demonstrates, can costs lives.

I first experienced the integration process in the fall of 1993 as platoon leader of a mechanized combat engineer platoon. The assignment for my platoon and me was to Fort Bliss, Texas, where we deployed to Kuwait with the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment (3d ACR) for Operation Intrinsic Action, a combined arms/coalition training exercise with Kuwaiti forces. My platoon was to augment the 3d ACR's organic engineers (habitual engineers) so they would have enough mechanized engineer support on the ground to complete their mission. I had never worked with this unique combined arms team, and I had a lot to learn in the area of integration.

The operation's live-fire exercise was staged at the Undari Range Complex, about 50 kilometers (km) from Kuwait City. The training required each ACR cavalry troop to take its turn going through a 20-km tactical obstacle course (tactical lane) consisting of minefields and enemy strongpoints. The four engineer platoons (three organic, one nonorganic) rotated as engineer support for the troops negotiating the lane. In the 3 months we were deployed, my platoon had the opportunity to integrate with each of the cavalry troops, although the process was not always successful.

Iteration 1

After working most of the day repairing obstacles on the tactical lane, my platoon reported to K Troop for the next day's operations. This was my first mission with the cavalry, and I felt confident that my platoon could meet any challenge. By the time we arrived at the assembly area it was dark, so I arranged my platoon within the perimeter and reported to the troop's tactical operation center. When I asked the whereabouts of the commander, the troop's executive officer (XO) told me the commander had already retired for the day. When I asked about the next day's operation, the XO became irritated and said, "Look, here's our troop's radio frequencies. Be ready to roll at 0400; tape up your front blackout drive lights, and keep your platoon behind my command track. And for heaven's sake, engineer, try to keep up!" So much for being welcomed into the fold of the combined arms team.

The short conversation shook my sense of how the engineers integrated. To the cavalry officer, I was not one of his team members, I was just one of those "damned engineers" that could not keep up. This was an eye opener for me, and I could not understand why the maneuver force had taken its engineer support so lightly. This was my first taste of a real-world, combined-arms team, and I could not see how it was going to work. When I returned to my platoon, my squad leaders were waiting for their orders. Taking the attitude that I would be ready for anything, I told the squad leaders we would prepare for our basic breach battle drill, and I would adjust that as circumstances required.

Early the next morning, my platoon pulled out with K Troop. Although visibility was poor because of dust, I kept the XO's command track in sight and my platoon in formation. My track had two radios, so I monitored K Troop's frequency as well as my own and kept my squad leaders briefed on the status of the battle.

K Troop's forward elements reached the line of departure just as the sun came up. The traffic on K Troop's net increased. Things were happening, and I braced myself for the imminent radio call to send my engineers forward for the breach. Twenty minutes later I heard that one of the scout platoons had encountered a minefield/wire obstacle. They were taking heavy direct fire and requested that the tanks be moved forward. The battle ensued and enemy artillery fire pinned down the tanks. I heard reports as they were being sent back and forth from the platoons to the XO. The K Troop commander was yelling orders to his platoons, and as the number of his vehicles being destroyed increased, his voice became more frantic. The battle to find a bypass around the minefield was taking a heavy toll.

Still not understanding how the cavalry worked, but understanding that something was wrong, I radioed the XO and reminded him that my engineers were still sitting behind him. The XO, in an irritated voice, demanded that I stay off the net. So, I quietly listened to the systematic destruction of K Troop. The final desperate words of the troop's commander were "Come on! Find that #@% bypass! Fight like men, dammit! Fight like men!" The company commander, in a last-ditch effort, attempted to roll through four rows of mines and became a casualty. Then the net was quiet. A voice from the tower declared the end of the exercise. The final count still alive included the troop's XO, two Bradleys, and a platoon of extremely bored engineers.

As my platoon remained behind to repair this iteration's damaged obstacles and K Troop limped back to its base camp, I wondered why the troop had not used the engineers. Maybe they did not understand what we could do for them. Even though my engineers had done nothing

tactically wrong during the iteration, I took it to heart that my new team had performed poorly. I took it for granted that the maneuver forces knew that engineers could breach minefields, and I did not know why we were not being used. I promised myself not to let this happen again.

As my platoon worked through the day preparing the lane for the next day's iteration, I made a list of all the things I could offer K Troop's commander. The list included everything from my platoon's strength to the maximum breaching distance of the mine-clearing line charge. I placed much of K Troop's failure on my not being able to sell my platoon's capabilities to the commander. Another problem was that I was completely out of the orders process. I set my mind to fix this.

Iteration 2

After a hot day of recovery, I was ordered to report to the squadron's heavy tank company. This time I left my 1st squad leader in charge, gave him the coordinates for the linkup point, and left to find the unit.

When I arrived at M Company's assembly area, the company's leaders were already conducting a rock drill (walkthrough) of the operation. I introduced myself to the commander. "Sir, Second Lieutenant Martinez reporting as your engineer support for tomorrow's operation!" Before the commander could raise both eyebrows, I handed him my list of engineer capabilities and said, "Sir, this is what I can do for you." This made him hesitate and then after folding the paper and placing it in his pocket, he motioned over to another lieutenant and said, "Good, just stand over next to the fire support officer, and you can brief after him." "Brief what, Sir?" I inquired. "Engineer stuff," he replied. When my turn came, I gave an assertive sales pitch on my platoon's capabilities. When I was done, the quiet was deafening. After what seemed an eternity the XO asked, "OK, any questions on tomorrow's plan?" Platoon leaders see me after this for your overlays." I felt I had just told a joke that no one understood. This integration thing was harder than I had thought. Again I returned to my platoon with not much to tell.

The next morning the scenario played out much as it had the day before. We followed the company's command track, and the lead elements encountered the minefield. Again, it was a desperate battle to find a bypass, and the company died in place. The only difference was that the commander, in his last desperate radio message asked, "Where're my engineers? Bring up my engineers!" The only problem with this was that they had placed my platoon so far back in the formation that by the time I got to the wire, nothing was left of the maneuver force. The lane's observer/controller called the battle off, resulting in another disappointing day.

The cavalry was so used to bypassing obstacles that they rarely used the engineers. The problem with this bypass-or-die philosophy was that this specific lane had no bypasses. Speed was important, and if the engineers could not provide the troops with a fast, quality product, they had no use for them. I was beginning to think that this was why the cavalry was hesitant about using the engineers: Time trapped on one side of the wire cost tanks. I modified my sales pitch to include speed. I also noticed that the tankers had a whole different jargon. My platoon sergeant had encountered similar problems in his logistical resupply operations. We remedied this by securing two copies of squadron and regimental tactical standing operating procedures and began translating engineer terms into tanker terminology. I felt this was the only way I could build credibility with the cavalry.

Iteration 3

Minutes after the order was published for my platoon to provide L Troop with engineer support for the next day's operation, I was on the road to its location. This time I arrived well before the orders process began. I reported to the commander and gave him a hard pitch: "Sir, I can get you through the obstacles tomorrow morning. If you try to bypass you will die. This is my plan. . . ." This time, the commander listened. I don't know if it was my assertiveness or the fact that two troops had previously failed, but he listened. I was beginning to understand the cavalry mentality, and I preached to that choir. I used terms that were familiar to the commander and based my plan on my newly acquired knowledge of cavalry operations. Finally, the integration process was moving; I had established myself by asserting my capabilities and by talking the same language. Now, all that was left was for me to back up my words with actions.

My platoon, well rehearsed in the breaching of obstacles, could get through any standard obstacle in less than 7 minutes. Even though I was confident, I knew that if I did not integrate the cavalry troop and fire support into my plan, the plan was doomed. During the rock drill, the other lieutenants were not sold on the fact that they were using engineers, but the commander reasserted his guidance and they grudgingly listened to my plan. The key was to keep my platoon as far forward as possible; have the scouts send back good intelligence on the obstacle; time the artillery to obscure the target as my platoon arrived at the breach site; give my engineers covering fire; and array the assault force to cross through the breach as soon as it was cleared.

The next morning L Troop, with its fully integrated engineers, moved to the line of departure. The pressure was mounting: I knew that if I could not produce what I had promised, I would find myself exiled to the rear of some command track for the rest of my time in the desert.

Then came the call: "Orange 1, this is Blue 1. I have an obstacle. Three rows of mines, approximately 100 feet in depth, with wire on the enemy side. Breach site grid QS793832." I replied: "Blue 1, this is Orange 1, moving forward at this time." As I linked up with the scout platoon leader, the sound of artillery hitting forward of our position was deafening. They had already begun obscuring the area forward of the breach site with smoke.

The scout platoon leader, who had reconned the site, fired one round at the breach point. My squads were already moving forward. Minutes later my breach squad of engineers was on the ground. A heavy cloud of smoke obscured the area forward of the breach site, and the winds were carrying it toward the enemy. My engineers could not have conducted a more perfect breach. Sixty pounds of composition 4 explosive was set off, sending an explosive thump throughout the breach area. The debris had not stopped falling when

my proofing and marking squad dismounted and charged on foot through the lane.

I watched as my squad leader shouted orders. He was only moments from throwing the canister of purple smoke to indicate that the breach was open, when I heard the scream of M1 tank engines coming up from behind me. It was White 1 with his Abrams. "Negative, White 1; wait for the purple smoke. I still have engineers in the lane. White 1, this is Orange 1, stop where you are I have engineers in the breach!" There was no reply. "Black 5 (the company's XO), this is Orange 1, White 1 is going to run over my engineers!" As I sat in disbelief, watching my engineers dive out of the breach lane and into the minefield, Black 5 replied in a calm voice, "Hey engineer, no one's going to run over your damn engineers."

The breach was successful; L troop secured the far side of the obstacle and continued on to beat the enemy. My fellow combined arms officers hailed me as a hero, but more important, I had established my place in the combined arms team. The only downside to the whole day was that my marking squad felt that the only integrating they had done was with the minefield they were forced to dive into. As the integration process continued, this and other challenges to our combined arms breach were worked out. When we left the deserts of Kuwait, we had all developed a true understanding of what it was like to belong to a combined arms team.

Integration Is Important

Integration of engineers into a combined arms team is extremely important, but too often engineers take a back seat in the integration process. I learned valuable lessons in Kuwait, one of which is that integration is not an automatic process. A platoon leader must be assertive, confident, and understand his capabilities and the terminology of his team. It is the engineer's responsibility to push the integration process. Above all, if the team fails, we all fail. ***MR***

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Our Achilles' Heel: Language Skills

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Imagine you are a Soldier in Iraq or Afghanistan. Wouldn't you feel safer if your combat leader was a linguist and conversant with local customs? What if your company's intelligence was provided by an illiterate? What if your best translator was someone the locals despised or considered to be a spy?

How can we distinguish between the respected, the thugs, the honest, or the dregs of a foreign society, if we cannot understand what they say to us? We Americans have a cultural bias against learning languages other than English, but now our Soldiers' lives depend on our doing so.

How accurately and well we analyze the indigenous people we deal with during the Global War on Terrorism might well determine the success or failure of counterinsurgency operations. Our combat training will be for nothing if our linguist does not tell us the truth or fails to recognize it because of a lack of training. A lack of foreign language skills is our Army's Achilles' heel. Timeliness and accuracy is everything in intelligence, and thus, a linguist's skills are more important than firepower. With the former, you might not need the latter.

Foreign language skills are mission-essential for an expeditionary army. Our Soldiers die in foreign lands because American comrades they can absolutely trust lack those skills. We forget that our job is to move, shoot, and communicate, and we forget that "communicate" does not refer just to radios.

When we conduct a raid and find no one there, what was the cause? Was the intelligence bad? Did we give the mission away because of poor operations security? Were we led to the wrong target? Were we too late in getting there? Was the enemy tipped off that we were coming? Is it possible our linguist missed a critical nuance because of his lack of skill? Where should the damage assessment begin? Who knew the truth? And who translated it for him?

For Want of a Language

Pham Xuan An, who wrote for *Time*, was a Communist spy during the Vietnam War. Erudite, witty, and insightful, he was said to be a pleasure to deal with. Ideologically motivated, he worked to destroy us. At the other extreme is the Iraqi who makes a separate peace because if he does not, the enemy will kill his family. Both types of spies (for the lack of a better word) gain access to our plans because they are skilled in our language and we are ignorant of theirs. The way into the American fortress is through the open gate of language. No traitor betrays us; our lack of training does.

Platoon leaders and operations center chiefs rely on linguists. Linguists are the interpreters on the streets for our patrols and the translators of recently recovered documents. For better or worse, we rely on who is available when we deploy. Army officials predicted a need for hundreds of Arabic speakers before Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Army ended up with 42. We deployed 140,000 troops to Iraq with 42 interpreters!

A Perishable Skill

Unless a Soldier has learned Arabic as a child, he will find conversing in it a perishable skill. Few retain a language without frequent practice with those who can conduct serious, adult conversations. Of the 42 linguists deployed during Operation Iraqi Freedom, probably only half could speak the language intelligently.

The ability to speak a foreign language skillfully cannot be put in

cold storage in the hope that it will sparkle again someday. Communicating with words is one level of skill, but to understand nuance, culture, and traditions is another. The latter should be a career pursuit. The Army, however, does not offer its Soldiers such an opportunity. As a fighting force, we are utterly dependent on linguists for field intelligence, to help in rapport building, and for the many unexpected missions that befall occupation Soldiers. Linguists speak with information sources, interpret important documents, and even read road signs for us.

Desperately Seeking Interpreters

All the financial assistance we allocate and all the infrastructure and civic affairs we provide must be explained to Iraqis and foreign nationals by someone, and the more reliable that person is, the better. The usual Army method is to seek out foreigners who speak English, but this often means tapping exclusively into Westernized groups. In Vietnam, we relied on French-Vietnamese Christian elites who had little, if any, contact with the country's Buddhist population. In Bosnia, we dealt with anyone who spoke English, regardless of his background, about which we usually knew next to nothing. Our Somali translators were ex-taxicab drivers granted interim security clearances.

Nothing has changed in Iraq. Our understanding of local social hierarchies is limited at best, a matter of total ignorance at worst. There are people you do not deal with in some societies and others who are invaluable when you are attempting to understand an entire culture, not just its parts. When problems arise regarding local customs, traditions, taboos, and social mores, someone who has spent his professional career understanding such issues is a godsend. (Of course, without such a person, you do not know you have the problem in the first place.) Absent a culturally astute, trusted linguist, we are forced to rely on whomever can help us muddle through. Ours, the most thoroughly trained, best-equipped Army in history, relies on virtually unknown foreigners vulnerable to insurgent death threats. How long will they valiantly resist threats to their loved ones before they betray us?

Training Our Own

How can we train our own effective translators? Those who study languages must understand the long-term utility of devoting themselves to years of rigorous study and practice. Unfortunately, there is no career path for officers to pursue this skill, and money incentives alone cannot do it. In the 19th century, the British Foreign Office assigned a man to a country more or less for his career. He became the man on the spot, the go-to civil servant who could be relied on to know his area and the personalities resident there. But there will never be a Lawrence of Arabia in the U.S. Army. He would be reassigned seven times or more before he developed the expertise Lawrence had.

Foreign language training must involve constant immersion. As a graduate of the Defense Language Institute (DLI), I would implement immediately a Berlitz-like foreign-language-only teaching regimen there. Assignments for graduates in their target countries should be either at embassies or consulates if no military bases require their presence. Assignments that demand interacting with local nationals should be highly sought after and rewarded as much as any other service position. No graduate of DLI should be allowed to live on post. His job is to interact with the locals: How better to do so than to live among them? When I was assigned to Germany, I knew three words for light machinegun, but none for diaper. It was through common, everyday dealings with young German families that I learned their words and ways and became better at my liaison job. Foreign area officers should also be assigned to foreign units. They should attend foreign schools; in fact, it should be a job requirement to do so.

Employ Incentives

We have native-born Americans who study languages at some of the finest universities in our land, yet we offer them nothing in the way of incentives to employ their language skills in an Army career. We have citizens who speak every language in the world. They are first- or second-generation immigrants. Yet the Army has not tapped into that linguistic reserve programmatically by encouraging them to help us become truly combat effective in the lands of their ancestors.

The Army must offer a career path for linguists. A good speaker of a foreign language is an asset. A trusted, trained language professional can save many lives. It is time to do something about the Army's Achilles' heel. ***MR***

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The Nine Principles of Combined Arms Action in a Counterinsurgency Environment

Lieutenant Colonel Adrian Bogart III, U.S. Army

The Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army recommended the following principles and axioms for publication in Military Review. *The author, a Special Forces officer, developed these nine principles while serving as the Assistant Chief of Staff, G9, for the 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division, Baghdad, in order to prepare the Division and its Brigade Combat Teams for counterinsurgency operations in a highly complex urban and rural combined, joint, interagency, and international environment.*

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1. By, With, and Through. Successful counterinsurgency (COIN) operations are conducted by, with, and through indigenous military, paramilitary, and police forces. Unilateral U.S. action promotes unilateral failure. Local forces know the terrain, the people, and the society and can identify insurgents who seemingly hide in the open. Apply Foreign Internal Defense techniques to build indigenous capability, and then *combat coach* host-nation forces.

2. Ask Why. *Understand the operational environment.* Know the geography like your own, respect the people, understand the history of the area, and pull forward the factors that mold the near-term memory of the populace. Know what makes the people comfortable (the friendly threshold), and then give it to them. Know what the enemy wants and is willing to die for (the enemy threshold), and then take him there.

3. The Enemy. The enemy order of battle is the *guerrilla* (red force—armed insurgent), the *underground* (yellow force—political and financial arm of the insurgency) and the *auxiliary* (green force—civilian support to the insurgency). The insurgency's objective is to subvert the people's confidence in the government's ability to protect and provide for them so that the insurgent's form of rule can manifest itself.

4. The Formula. COIN operations must strike a weighted balance between *lethal operations* to kill or capture the enemy, and *civic action (nonlethal)* to remove the causes of instability that fuel the insurgency. Organize into assault, exploitation, and pursuit forces and develop civil information and intelligence nets to find guerrilla forces, enemy supply lines, and command and control nodes, and then conduct deliberate or hasty attacks and civic action to clear the guerrilla, occupy the underground, and secure the auxiliary. Use the lethality of mechanized forces to encircle and dominate an objective, establish artillery strongpoints throughout the battlespace and interdict enemy activities through observed fire, and use the speed of air and mechanized forces to cover large areas to pursue the enemy to the point of exhaustion. Demand reporting discipline to maximize trust and enhance freedom of maneuver.

5. Effective Levels. Command, control and intelligence in a counterinsurgency occur at the lowest level. *It is all bottom up and little top down*. Company commanders are the key leaders, and the company is the unit of success. Large sweeping battalion-level operations fail. Multiple-company operations executed simultaneously or in near sequence, synchronized by the battalion headquarters, work well. Brigade headquarters is the lowest level of effective diplomatic, informational, and economic synchronization with the military objective. Division headquarters establishes priorities, sets parameters, provides resources, manages the end state, and enforces the transition to follow-on U.S. Government support.

6. Tear Down the Walls. Walls never prevent forts from falling or cities from succumbing to siege. Forces confined to bases act as magnets for enemy attacks. Offensive night-and-day patrolling is mandatory to protect the force. *Staying put allows the enemy freedom of action.*

7. Money. *Money is a weapon system, but not a system for military monopolization.* The military application of money should be predominantly for tactical exploitation, whereas the large application of funding is a Department of State responsibility for foreign aid and reconstruction. The Department of State has enduring investment within the country, whereas the military is only transient. Too often, the military disburses funding for immediate satisfaction and "feel good" projects because long-term, greater gain programs cannot be effected during the deployment timeframe.

8. Civil-Military Operations (CMO) are the Other Side of the COIN. In a counterinsurgency everything is a civil-military operation. The *center of gravity is the population*—what the enemy fights for and what we defend. Counterinsurgency is a war fought over human terrain. Influencing, convincing, managing perceptions, and protecting the populace are keys to a successful COIN campaign. Civil-military operations are the battlespace operating systems manager for nonlethal operations, which are predominant during a counterinsurgency.

9. Knowing When You Have Won. You know you have won when the militant threat waged by guerrilla forces is reduced to criminal activity, when subversion fostered by the underground enters the political process, and when the quality of life increases so that the auxiliary turns to the people and the government, not to the insurgents.

Leadership Axioms to the Nine Principles of Combined Arms Action in a COIN Environment

- Adapt formations to fight against the insurgent.
- Maximize the strengths of all the commands and organizations in the fight and mold them into one focused effort; eliminate redundancy.
- Adapt mindsets to fight the insurgency.
- Move to the enemy; do not fix yourself.
- Think like the enemy, not yourself.
- The leading edge of a COIN fight centers on small-unit tactics and junior-leader empowerment.
- Evolve the COIN campaign as you obtain success.
- Define the enemy order of battle and systematically attack its components.
- Maintain focus on the center of gravity—the populace.

- Flatten command and control structures.
- Condense reporting requirements to daily operations, daily intelligence summaries, and weekly rollups.
- Find the thoroughbreds in the force and let them run.
- Teach Soldiers how to think, not what to think.
- Do not overreact; think first.
- Coordinate key tasks with the diplomatic, informational and economic elements of national power.
- Go on the offense and stay there.
- Master cultural astuteness, and then go beyond that to master the human dimension of war.
- Treat others as you want to be treated.
- Stay ahead of the adapting insurgent.
- Avoid the arrogance of combat.
- Stay in the fight until the job is done; you cannot commute to war.
- Realize that it cannot all be done by one element of national power. Military operations must integrate with diplomatic, informational, and economic lines of operation.
- Get all leaders out on the battlefield.
- Lead from the front, but do not get in the way.
- Ask for the resources needed, and do not overextend beyond the resources available.
- Focus on the basics: shoot, move, and communicate.
- Understand that the key leaders are the junior leaders.
- Consider mission, enemy, terrain and weather, time, troops available, and civilians (METT-TC) during mission analysis.
- Maintain a sense of humor.
- Realize that warriors die in combat, that true warriors respect death, and that warriors can embrace the loss with the family but not be consumed by it.
- Do not worry about dying in combat; if you do, you will get yourself killed.
- Stay out of the papers and off the wire.
- Write down what you did, what you learned, and how you achieved it, and give the information to other warriors so they will know how to fight and win against the guerrilla, the underground, and the auxiliary. ***MR***

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MR Book Reviews

DEFIANT SUPERPOWER: The New American Hegemony, Donald E. Nuechterlein, Potomac Books, Inc., Washington, D.C., 2005, $17.79.

Defiant Superpower is Donald Nuechterlein's eighth book on U.S. foreign policy. Nuechterlein, career diplomat and prolific scholar, examines U.S. foreign policy since 9/11 using the widely read analytical model he developed in his earlier books.

Nuechterlein's now-traditional framework divides national interests into four categories—defense of the homeland, economic well-being, favorable world order, and promotion of values—and examines those interests in terms of the intensity with which they are pursued (survival, vital, major, and peripheral). In the opening chapter he concludes that empire is not an accurate or useful way to describe the current U.S. role in the world and prefers the term "hegemonic power." For Nuechterlein, hegemonic power describes a strong degree of influence over world affairs that is less direct and overt than the term "empire."

The United States has exercised various forms of hegemony since the end of World War II, but in the last 10 years or so, U.S. hegemony has been unbalanced by competing powers. Other nations have become reluctant to tackle difficult foreign-policy issues, and global terrorism has emerged as a threat. Since the late 1990s, the United States has felt compelled to go it alone, hence Nuechterlein's term "defiant hegemony." It is important to note, however, that he dates the emergence of defiant hegemony to the late 1990s and President Bill Clinton's second administration, *not* to President George W. Bush's administration.

In an ominous tone, Nuechterlein discusses the consequences of this defiant approach—international, diplomatic, and popular opinions unfavorable to U.S. policies, and domestic weariness at the various costs of defiant hegemony. Yet he does not show what the practical effect of that disapproval means to the United States, nor does he offer an alternative beyond the vague prescription that the United States should seek international support whenever possible. While diplomatic opposition and unfavorable poll numbers abroad are not good things, they might well be a price worth paying for national security or victory. The book does not offer a method for weighing the two competing interests.

Nuechterlein specifically highlights the domestic and international opposition to Bush's decision to attack Iraq in 2003 and questions the country's ability to sustain the continuing costs of the war. Yet he agrees with Bush's decision. The reader is left looking for the final reckoning in Nuechterlein's analysis.

While Nuechterlein works hard to present a balanced critique, he may have tried too hard. After having read the book, we are left wondering what the point of the exercise was. The book is neither judgmental nor prescriptive; it is essentially a textbook that leaves conclusions to the reader.

Defiant Superpower might be worth reading for its analysis of the decision to attack Iraq using Nuechterlein's well-accepted framework for understanding national interests. Ultimately, however, its limited scope and muddled conclusions fail to satisfy.

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NIGHT DRAWS NEAR: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War, Anthony Shadid, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 2005, 424 pages, $26.00.

While numerous Western journalists were embedded with U.S. troops during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, most of them left as soon as major combat operations concluded. Anthony Shadid, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for *The Washington Post*, was not only embedded with the Iraqi people, he stayed well past the initial, premature proclamations of victory. *Night Draws Near* draws on his years of work in Iraq, powerfully reminding the reader of the suffering that civilians undergo in war and leveraging Shadid's unique perspective as an Arab-American fluent in Arabic to convey the dissatisfaction, confusion, and resentment that define daily life for many Iraqis.

Relying on sources ranging from a fairly pro-American Shiite psychiatrist to an impoverished family of an insurgent killed by U.S. forces, Shadid weaves historical background, firsthand observations, and numerous interviews into a loosely chronological exploration of Iraq's recent history.

Although Shadid shows remarkable balance, the book's picture of the situation is bleak, implying at points that there is little hope for understanding between a country intent on delivering "freedom" and the people of Iraq. Saddam's reign made the notion of freedom—already foreign to most Arabs, who are more concerned with justice—a terrifying one since his tyranny had bred dependence and criminality, neither of which are ideal ingredients for stable self-rule.

Shadid never vilifies U.S. forces. Instead, he portrays them as earnest and sincere, but somewhat fumbling. At one point, he shadows U.S. Soldiers—who blithely believe they are spreading stability and goodwill—and captures the resentment and anger they spread simply by their presence and unintentional cultural transgressions (like entering a school where women teach so they can visit their children).

In the book's most damning passages, Shadid brilliantly captures many of these moments of cultural incompatibility, in which each side not only causes an undesired reaction in the other, but fails even to realize that it has happened. The book is, however, not all gloom and doom; Shadid's humility and candor allow us to glimpse his own struggles over the best paths for Americans and Arabs alike. He refuses to predict the pessimistic future the bulk of the book implies, closing with a meditation on the heartening January 2005 elections.

Compelling and troubling as the book is, it falls prey to the organizational monsters that stalk reporters compiling their dispatches into books: repetition and disorganization. Despite standing to benefit from some editing and reorganization, the book is valuable reading for anyone interested in the situation in Iraq, especially those likely to deploy there.

The initial confrontation with cultural incompatibility (for example, frustration with Iraqis who simultaneously condemn the United States for failing to impose order and for initiating an occupation in an attempt to impose order) is better conducted in the comfort of one's couch than in a Baghdad police station.

MAJ William J. Rice, USA, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

AN INSTINCT FOR WAR: Scenes from the Battlefields of History, Roger Spiller, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2005, 403 pages, $29.95.

An Instinct for War, consisting of 13 short stories, highlights a series of moments in history when warfare changed profoundly. Using a number of notable figures associated with the evolution of military thought, Roger Spiller skillfully combines imagination and meticulous research to shrewdly engage and challenge the reader. From the wars in ancient China to the American Civil War to imagining future war (ironically called "The Discovery of Kansas"), each story holds its own compelling message; combined, they are a resounding success.

Unencumbered by footnotes and supporting quotations, Spiller's inventive use of numerous first-person narratives is commendable and refreshing. Likewise, the succinct, animated manner of each story affords a satisfying and brisk read. But *An Instinct for War* is more than just a series of creative vignettes that highlight some of the historical turning points in the conduct of war. Readers will be confronted with aspects of morality, philosophy, and the wider human instinct for conflict. In the forward to chapter 10, Spiller asks: "Romance or knowledge: which best sustains a nation in the violent extremes of modern war?" The ensuing story ingeniously explores the strain of the Great War (World War I) and the ultimate consequence of untreated battle stress.

Perhaps the most captivating chapter of Spiller's work is the penultimate story, titled "At the Fair." With a break from the comforts of history, Spiller articulates a number of interviews that confront aspects of contemporary U.S. military thinking. He does this without judgment, allowing readers the opportunity to draw their own conclusions. Perhaps Spiller is indirectly suggesting that we are again at the gates of another historical turning point in the conduct of war.

An Instinct for War offers timely insights into the human challenges of armed conflict. It is skillfully written and always thought provoking. The contemporary parallels to many of Spiller's historical anecdotes might provide some comfort to the modern Soldier. Overall, *An Instinct for War* is an enjoyable exploration into the meaning of war.

MAJ Andrew M. Roe, British Army, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

SISTER IN THE BAND OF BROTHERS: Embedded with the 101st Airborne in Iraq, Katherine M. Skiba, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2005, 257 pages, $29.95.

Sister in the Band of Brothers demonstrates that embedding reporters in military units works. The U.S. Department of Defense uses the media to communicate with the American people about the war by allowing reporters unlimited access with limited censorship. Embedding journalists is about humanizing Soldiers in the midst of distant conflicts. It informs the public about the war, not from briefing rooms in Kuwait City, but from austere base camps in Iraq.

The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's* Katherine Skiba was one of 600 journalists embedded with U.S. forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Her assignment took her with the 101st

Airborne Division from the deserts of Kuwait to the streets of Baghdad. Amid the many books recently published about this war, Skiba's is distinctive because of her vibrant writing, compassion for Soldiers, and astute perspective.

After a week's training in a reporters' boot camp at Fort Benning, Georgia, Skiba joined the 159th Aviation Brigade of the 101st in Kuwait. One of eight journalists with the unit, and the only female, she shared the same sand-strewn, spartan conditions as the U.S. Soldiers. She adapted to the desert and military life after some stumbling—like wearing her helmet backward, enduring a fierce sandstorm, and facing an even fiercer battalion commander.

Flying with the brigade commander in a Blackhawk helicopter, Skiba entered "bad guy land," as the Soldiers called Saddam Hussein's Iraq. As a self-described "action girl reporter," she witnessed the tragedy of death, the horrors of warfare, and the inexplicable wartime bonds between Soldiers. Her account of the fall of Baghdad, exemplified by the smashing of Saddam's statue, is particularly insightful.

Skiba writes with compassion and empathizes with the Soldiers she encounters, but without becoming an uncritical booster for the war. Skiba's intimate account is a valuable contribution to the growing literature on Operation Iraqi Freedom and a lesson in public affairs.

Embedding should be a permanent feature of military operations. It allows journalists to be responsible members of the media while helping preserve America's status as a free nation, without themselves becoming tools of the Pentagon.

MAJ Wayne H. Bowen, USAR, Arkadelphia, Arkansas

MY LIFE IS A WEAPON: A Modern History of Suicide Bombing, Christoph Reuter, trans. by Helena Ragg-Kirkby, Princeton University Press, NJ, 2004, 179 pages, $16.98.

Christoph Reuter, an international correspondent for the German magazine *Stern,* spent 8 years moving among the society that in the 1980s produced suicide brigades for the Iran-Iraq War. Reuter interviewed entire communities, from Lebanon's Hizballah, to Palestinian militants, to Sri Lankan Tamils, while investigating the culture of martyrdom. Originally published in German as Mein Leben ist eine Waffe, *My Life is a Weapon* offers insight into the nuances of the justification and conditioning of suicide missions. Reuter challenges the assumption that suicide bombers fit into a neat, typical profile, drawing examples from rich and poor, secular and religious, Marxist or jihadist, and female and male bombers.

Reuter quotes respected Sunnis and Shiites who cite Ali (Muhammad's grandson and the fourth rightly guided caliph): "The *Quran* [Islamic Book of Divine Revelation] is but ink and paper, it does not speak for itself. Instead, it is human beings who give effect to it according to their limited personal judgments and opinions." Reuter maintains that the *Quran* (if followed literally) contains no theological or judicial system, only 200 clear rules of conduct. The *Quran* represents an interpretive form of moral and social life that particular sects of Islam use to justify war against the West. Reuter argues that Shia Islam with its core cult of martyrdom, self-sacrifice, and underdog tenacity, is well suited for war. As an example, he details the ease with which Iran's Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini created mass suicide battalions to use against Iraqi forces.

Hizballah's clerics have exported their doctrine and technical expertise to other organizations such as the Sunni-dominated Palestinian terror group Hamas and Al-Qaeda affiliates. Reuter describes how a suicide bomber in a crowded cafe in Israel simply unbuttoned his shirt, revealed his dynamite belt to the terror of patrons, allowed several to escape, and then detonated himself. The message was simple: You are not safe; flee from here and tell others. Suicide bombing in Palestine has been marketed to such an extent that the young view it as an acceptable and even glorious way of settling major political problems.

Reuter's book is recommended for those engaged in force protection and who want to expand their knowledge of counterterrorism. Although some Americans might disagree with Reuter's European point of view, his book is recommended to enhance the awareness of suicide bombing.

LCDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, MSC, USN, Gaithersburg, Maryland

THE FUTURE OF WAR: The Re-Enchantment of War in the Twenty-First Century, Christopher Coker, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA, 2004, 162 pages, $19.95.

Christopher Coker's intriguing book investigates whether citizens are "disenchanted" with state-generated warfare. Coker predicates his argument on two assumptions: future warriors will remain human, and some human beings are born to be natural fighters.

How does a nation prepare its people to fight? Coker argues that as long as other humans honor their fallen, people will always be willing to assume the role of the warrior. Also, as long as the "metaphysical" nature of dying for one's country still remains a meaningful sacrifice, young people will continue to take up arms. There are, however, those who believe people living in modern societies are becoming ever more disenchanted with waging war. The main catalyst includes the exploding, instantaneous information age that we live in, which has created a cosmopolitan class of citizens whose tendency is to shed nationalism while becoming more accepting of others.

Coker credits modern technology as well as the media for abating the enchantment over killing. Technology allows war to seem sanitized because warring factions can avoid collateral effects against noncombatants. The media deserves credit for seldom displaying war in its cruelest form.

Coker also discusses how the coming "biotechnological" age will allow societies to manipulate populations by genetically modifying human traits. Soldiers who have proven their battlefield mettle could have DNA taken for future warrior breeding. Coker argues that there are such things as the consummate warrior, for example, Finnish Army Sergeant Lance Simo Hyha, who is credited with killing 219 Soviets using a standard-issue rifle. Not only could a society breed its warriors, but it could also create a pool of adversarial thinkers.

With synthetic drugs designed to correct behaviors and physical performance, why not develop drugs designed to make superior warriors? Soldiers on mind-altering drugs could display enhanced performance,

perform under increased pain thresholds, and possibly even avoid post-combat stress. The idea of drugged fighters is not unique, and according to Coker, the jury is out as to whether Soldiers will show compassion when it is needed and whether self-esteem will be lost through actions done under the influence.

The book is written in a monographic, organized fashion backed by empirical data, logic, and anecdotes. Whitlock's approach broaches complex and ethically stimulating subjects, but the topic of maintaining a warrior class is a social issue that deserves addressing by some of our most senior military and civilian leaders. This quick-reading book is filled with thought-provoking material and is especially suited for the officer who is interested in the social aspects associated with warfare and the transformation of the warrior Soldier.

LTC Tommy J. Tracy, USA,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

WORLD ON FIRE: Organizations, Knowledge, and Nuclear Weapons Devastation, Lynn Eden, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 2004, 365 pages, $32.50.

The Cold War was largely characterized by a balance of power between the Soviet Union and the United States in regard to their possession of nuclear weapons. However, if used, U.S. weapons, yielding up to 15,000 kilotons, would have caused severe damage, if not total annihilation, of Soviet state infrastructure. But, comprehensive damage-assessment in regard to the use of U.S. nuclear weapons was based solely on the blast potential of the nuclear detonation. What was not included in damage-assessment planning was the effect of the firestorm that would have followed a nuclear blast. The omission of fire damage subsequent to a nuclear detonation left a gaping hole in strategic nuclear damage-assessment planning.

While Lynn Eden covers a number of issues relating to strategic and nuclear applications, her focus is on the lack of comprehensive damage analysis in regard to atomic and nuclear weapons, specifically regarding fire. According to Eden, the failure to develop a comprehensive damage-assessment metric was largely a result of existing paradigms in the U.S. defense establishment and the scientific communities of the time. The inability to fully understand and accurately predict the dynamics of nuclear conflagrations and associated firestorms led to an incomplete assessment of U.S. destructive potential.

Eden concludes that "organizational frames" caused the dearth of comprehensive nuclear damage assessments. Throughout the book she addresses how organizations develop, change, and implement knowledge based on collective studies and how this body of knowledge can preclude comprehensive analysis. In this effort, she discusses how organizational knowledge often reflects biases, agendas, or the collective zeitgeist of an associated community.

Painstakingly detailed and thoroughly researched, Eden's book provides the reader with an abundance of information derived from various resources. A plethora of scientific references, coupled with interviews of relevant persons, provides a sound foundation for her thesis. The amount of detail and scientific explanation provide sufficient background for her conclusions and insights regarding contemporary thought.

However, the overwhelming amount of scientific material Eden provides puts the main message at risk as supporting theses tend to get mired in the details and specific science of damage assessment and nuclear application. She spends a large part of the work explaining the scientific rationales and their specific causes, and as a result, the reader can lose the forest for the trees. Despite this, her thorough research brings to light the many issues related to her thesis.

This is a solid academic effort and worthy of review by any student addressing issues related to nuclear warfare. While the book cannot be referred to as light reading, it does draw attention to numerous issues and considerations relevant to strategic bombing and nuclear applications. I highly recommend this book for anyone who is serious about the study of the Cold War, nuclear warfare, and associated sciences.

LTC John M. Curatola, USMC,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

SPY HANDLER: MEMOIR OF A KGB OFFICER: The True Story of the Man who Recruited Robert Hanssen & Aldrich Ames, Victor Cherkashin with Gregory Feifer, Basic Books, New York, 2005, 352 pages, $26.00.

Spy Handler is a fascinating account of field craft, intelligence organizations, Western and Soviet spies, and the fate of those spies caught by counterintelligence services. Author Victor Cherkashin, the KGB agent in Washington, D.C., who handled infamous American spies Robert Hanssen and Aldrich Ames, insists that another major spy, recruited by the Soviets, remains in U.S. Government service to this day. Students of the Cold War will want to read this book.

Spy Handler covers Cherkashin's 40-year career with the KGB, including his counterintelligence and foreign intelligence work in the United States, Australia, India, Lebanon, England, Western Europe, and the Middle East. A dedicated communist, Cherkashin retired from the KGB with the rank of colonel and the Order of Lenin (the highest national honor of the Soviet Union).

Destined to be a major source for future Cold War studies on intelligence, the book ranks with Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev's *The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America—The Stalin Era* (Modern English, London, 2000); Vasili Mitrokhin, trans. by Christopher Andrew, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (Basic Books, Cambridge, MA, 2000); Philip Knightley's *The Second Oldest Profession* (Penguin, New York, 1988); and Milton Bearden and James Risen's *The Main Enemy: The Inside Story of the CIA's Final Showdown with the KGB* (Random House, Westminster, MD, 2003).

The book has a few problems, one of which is that there is no index, bibliography, or glossary. Also, almost all of Cherkashin's citations are from English-language books, and he adds no commentary to his account through the endnotes. Not knowing if he has access to archives, the reader has no easy way to check Cherkashin's facts.

On the plus side, the book is an easy, fascinating read, thanks to Gregory Feifer, who reworked

Cherkashin's manuscript into a super product. Feifer is an accomplished Russian linguist who has again proven that the best translations are done by someone translating a foreign language into one's native tongue (not vice versa.)

The value of this book goes beyond its revelations about recent history. It should be of great interest to intelligence and counterintelligence officers, police investigators, government leaders, and ordinary citizens. The number of well-placed, trusted people who are willing to sell out their country for money or from pique is staggering. Cherkashin documents many of these. Clearly there are many more.

Lester W. Grau,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

MR Letters

TRADOC Commander's Reply to Brigadier Aylwin-Foster

General William S. Wallace, Commander, *U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Virginia*—I would like to thank Brigadier Nigel R.F. Aylwin-Foster for his contribution to our profession's intellectual discourse. It is clear from his article, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," which appeared in the November-December 2005 *Military Review,* that his intentions were honorable. As a profession, the Army prides itself on its ability to critically assess our performance and seek out areas where we can improve. His appraisal of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) from May 2004 to January 2005 is an example of the candor required from our closest friends and Allies. Although I do not agree with all of Aylwin-Foster's points, most are worthy of review.

There were areas during OIF I-II that could have been done differently and might have proven successful in reducing the insurgency; hindsight provides a remarkably precise lens to examine the past. It is worthwhile to provide our Allies feedback on where the U.S. Army has identified shortcomings, how we are addressing those issues, and where we must continue to improve.

Cultural acuity is an area where we must continue to improve—and we have taken up that challenge. Our vision of the future leader and Soldier is a pentathlete skilled not just in military tasks, but the leader attributes required for the transition periods between war and peace; the lines of which are not only blurred but will probably occur simultaneously in our rapidly changing world. Cultural acumen must be ingrained throughout the three domains of the Army Training and Leader Development Model—institutional, operational experience, and self development.

Our schools now teach the fundamentals of culture, and our most recent doctrine identifies cultural understanding as a critical component of accomplishing full-spectrum operations. Clearly linked to cultural acuity is the ability to communicate. It would be unrealistic to train every Soldier in multilanguage fluency, but there are creative solutions being examined and implemented. We have placed increased emphasis on basic language skills and provided all Soldiers access to the Rosetta Stone Foreign Language Program via the Internet and Army eLearning. Clearly, more work must be done: we accept the challenge.

I agree that changing an organization's culture is far more challenging than changing structures or equipment. As the Army continues its transformation, it is imperative to educate leaders in ambiguous scenarios where there are no right answers but where initiative, seizing opportunities, and prudent risk taking is stressed. During peacetime the Institutional Army drives change. During war the Operating Force drives change through gained combat experience and its development of tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) and best practices.

The U.S. Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) must draw closer to the forces in the field, learn from their experiences, and equal their agility. Programs such as the Lessons Learned Integration (L2I) initiatives and changes to the Combat Training Centers are required to maintain pace with the changing operating environment and prepare Soldiers and units for its demands. Aylwin-Foster's assessment of U.S. command channels being staff driven, hierarchical, and tending to discourage the necessary swift adaptation required by the demands of a counterinsurgency is of concern. From my experience this is not indicative of the U.S. Army. To the contrary, I have seen the remarkable ability of leaders and organizations to adapt and decentralize.

I disagree with Aylwin-Foster's assessment that U.S. forces place relatively little emphasis on human intelligence (HUMINT) sources and concentrate on technological assets to gather intelligence. We all can agree that HUMINT is the best means to understand your area of responsibility, particularly where "human terrain" dominates the scene. I think we can all appreciate the value of technically derived intelligence as well. We continue to use every intelligence source available—human and technical—to answer the commander's intelligence requirements, allowing him to make timely, accurate decisions. Successful operations depend on precise, actionable intelligence. Every one of our Soldiers must be a sensor, and we must work to improve information sharing across the joint, interagency, and multinational environment.

I agree that every operation has second-order effects—either positive or negative—that must be considered and planned for before execution. Aylwin-Foster's discussion of the two doctrinal counterinsurgency models (attrition based or separating the insurgent from the population) is helpful as we attempt to see ourselves more clearly as we develop the needed balance in our approach. A question that commanders at all levels must ask themselves is: Will

our actions contribute to the long-term security of the population, or is this a short-term action with potentially negative effects? To be fair to the commanders in Baghdad, Al Anbar Province, and the Sunni Triangle, their enemy situation is far different from the enemy situation in Basra. These different conditions make it difficult and potentially dangerous to generalize problems and solutions. Our forces must be prepared for simultaneous full-spectrum operations.

Aylwin-Foster's article has generated much energy and discussion among our profession. I thank him for his contribution to the intellectual discourse required to win this long war and transform our Army for the needs of the 21st century. His article has been read throughout TRADOC organizations. We accept Aylwin-Foster's criticism and the challenge of correcting deficiencies. More important, we appreciate his candor. It is truly only the closest of friends and most trusted of allies that see their relationship strengthened by exchanges such as these.

Aylwin-Foster's Critique

Susan Craig, *Analyst, Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*—Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster's article was an enlightening, if somewhat painful, critique of U.S. Army counterinsurgency operations in Iraq. Some have dismissed the article as snobbish (what do the Brits know?) or off the mark (Fallujah was the Marines fault, not the Army's). I believe it offered valuable insight into our most trusted ally's perspective.

As a student in the Army's pilot course on red teaming, I am being challenged to understand perceptions of our partners, as well as our enemies. As Colonel Gregory Fontenot, U.S. Army, Retired, explained in the September-October 2005 *Military Review* article "Seeing Red: Creating a Red-Team Capability for the Blue Force," a successful red team "provides the commander with an independent capability to continuously challenge OE [operational environment] concepts, plans, and operations from partner and adversary perspectives." What better way to understand our partner's perspective than to listen to his candid firsthand assessment of our strengths and weaknesses? Aylwin-Foster has made my job as a red teamer easy!

The more difficult part of my red-teaming job is to promote a culture within our organizations that embraces criticism. It is much easier to dismiss Aylwin-Foster's assessment as limited or altogether wrong than it is to make changes in response to it. From an American perspective, it is difficult to see how our optimistic, action-oriented, technologically advanced, and command-centric military culture could have downsides. But Aylwin-Foster demonstrates that in a counterinsurgency, these attributes do not necessarily contribute to success.

Aylwin-Foster has offered an honest, constructive evaluation of our conduct in Iraq. It is an appraisal that we need in order to understand both our most trusted partner and ourselves. We should thus welcome Aylwin-Foster's critique and value it for what it tells us about the British and for what it tells us about ourselves. Now, if we could only get our enemies to offer their perceptions so openly, my job as a red teamer would be done.

Operation Unified Assistance

Lieutenant Colonel John M. Curatola, *Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*—This letter is in response to Lieutenant Colonel James Daniel's article "Operation Unified Assistance: Tsunami Transitions" which appeared in the January-February 2006 *Military Review.* While Daniel did an excellent job of bringing to light an important issue regarding the military to civilian transition during Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief operations, he incorrectly identified the commands tasked to provide support.

U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) is not Pacific Command (PACOM) as he wrote in his article. USARPAC is a subordinate command to PACOM. Furthermore the Tsunami Relief tasking was sent from PACOM to Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) who then tasked III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) in Okinawa Japan. III MEF then deployed forces and served as the core element from which the Combined Support Force (CSF) 536 command element grew. I find it interesting that in the article there was no mention of this tasking of III MEF or the Marines. While this was a truly joint and multinational effort, III MEF provided the bulk of forces to support this operation.

Best Practices in Counterinsurgency

Second Lieutenant Samuel J. Gras, *Military Intelligence, Bloomington Recruiting Station, Indiana*—In "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency" (*Military Review* May-June 2005) Kalev I. Sepp illustrates successful and unsuccessful tactics from a historical review of counterinsurgencies. Although Sepp provides a general approach to success in fighting against insurgencies, his analysis is generic and lacks any description of the differences in insurgencies themselves as a determining variable for success or failure. Distinct national, ethnic, and cultural characteristics limit the use of a template such as Sepp presents.

Sepp rightly identifies the loyalty of the population as the qualifying factor and follows with tactics to be used in order to gain civil support. What he misses are the differences between the identities and goals of the Iraqi population and insurgent groups to those he cites. What worked in El Salvador or didn't work in Vietnam is of marginal use to the current conflict. The Iraqi insurgency is unique from the postcolonial independence movements and revolutionary Cold War movements from which he draws his lessons.

The majority of the violent actors in Iraq are drawn from the group formerly in power. This requires a much different approach from traditional counterinsurgency. By defeating the Ba'ath government and disbanding the Army, all elements of national sovereignty ceased to exist. The Coalition faced anarchy and a power vacuum. The population necessarily looked to alternate sources of authority. New centers of power emerged [that had] suffered decades of repression. Although political sovereignty passed to the Iraqis in 2004, two standard elements of national sovereignty were lacking: a monopoly of organized violence and control of one's territory. The violence in Iraq results more from a power vacuum than from a one-dimensional insurgency for which Sepp provides advice.

Another exceptional characteristic of the Iraq insurgency is its variety of groups. Countering the violent actors in Iraq, who include

religiously motivated transnational terrorist groups, Sunni nationalists, competing groups within the Shiite community, and criminal elements requires a multifaceted approach. Some groups can be placated by economic development or political inclusion while in other groups, the members must be killed or captured. As there are a variety of groups with disparate goals, there must likewise be a variety of counterinsurgency tactics. Sepp's one-size-fits-all approach isn't enough.

Sepp's article is useful in its description of proven tactics required to fight a traditional insurgency defined as "an organized rebellion aimed at overthrowing a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict." His approach lacks the specificity needed to be useful as a prescription for Iraq. Although it is helpful to look at past experiences, each conflict will have unique characteristics and require fresh thinking.

To Create a Stable Afghanistan

Hamid Hussain, *Port Jefferson, New York*—Major Andrew Roe's article "To create a Stable Afghanistan: Provisional Reconstruction Teams, Good Governance, and a Splash of History" (November-December 2005 *Military Review*), was interesting reading. Roe is advising us to learn from a historical, successful experiment of the colonial British era and implement the same model in Afghanistan.

Surely, there are many advantages to adopting some of the policies of the past. This might be helpful in the case of Afghan tribes on the eastern and southwestern border but might not be practical for the whole country. Twenty-first century issues might resemble the old ones, but the solutions have to be more innovative. At a psychological level, the very idea of a colonial model for Afghanistan will not be acceptable to Afghanistan. The plan might have some practical merits in selective rural areas, but this methodology might not be practical in urban areas.

Some minor corrections [also need to be made in reference to] the administrative structure of the Northwest Frontier of colonial India. Roe mentions that security in the administrative districts was provided by irregulars or scouts under the leadership of deputy commissioners. This is not correct. Roe has viewed the administrative structure of the Northwest Frontier as a single entity while it was actually two types. The so-called "settled areas" were organized on the administrative structure of a "district" headed by a deputy commissioner. The five districts (Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan) were on the model of other districts of India where security was provided by police forces and where the legal system was run under the Indian Penal Code with regular court procedures. The areas between these districts and the Afghanistan border were tribal areas that were considered a "buffer."

The tribal areas were divided administratively in the late 19th century for better control. This organization was based on "political or tribal agencies" (Khyber, Kurram, and North and South Waziristan, and so on), each headed by a "political agent." In the agencies, normal Indian law didn't apply. There were no courts or police system. A mixture of tribal customs, assembly of tribal elders, allowances, recruitment in tribal levies, and threat of punitive expeditions was used for loose control of these tribal areas.

Security in these areas was provided by tribal levies called Khassadars and scouts. Khassadars were recruited from the local tribes and were responsible for local escort and protection of roads while scouts were recruited from both local and distant tribes of tribal areas. In addition, members of some tribes or clans of settled areas, such as Yusufzais and Khattaks, served in many scout units. This system is still very much in place in the tribal areas of Pakistan. ***MR***

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